

# **ISLAMIC GOVERNANCE AND THEOCRACY**

By

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Allah is Sovereign. Islamic political system is based on its specific worldview that is essential to know in any understanding of Islam. The Qur'an tells us that Allah is the Creator and Lord of the whole universe including humankind and all that is associated with them. He is overpowering and is irresistibly dominant over all His creation. He knows all and governs all. He is ever living and everlasting and all His creation, willingly or unwillingly, is obedient to Him. Whatever He wills gets done. It is His power that is established and none can interfere in it in anyway. Thus it is Allah who possesses all the powers and attributes of sovereignty and none else

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whatever possesses any of these. Therefore, the sovereignty of the entire universe only belongs to Allah alone and none other than Him has a share in it.

Similarly, sovereignty over all of humankind rightfully belongs to Allah and no human or nonhuman power could control or decide any of the human affairs. The only difference between humans and others of Allah's creation is as follows. While in all of the universe and even in the autonomous part of human's own body His sovereignty is established automatically, it is the part that is granted autonomy by Allah where it is not forcibly established. It is rather established by inviting humankind to willingly submit themselves according to the course established by Him in the revealed scriptures. The Qur'an is very explicit on this: Is it not His to create and to govern?.

﴿أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

(Al Araf,7:54)

The Command is for none but Allah. He has commanded you not to surrender to anyone save

Him. This is the Right Way of life, but most men understand not.

﴿إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ (Yousuf 12:40)

We have sent you the Book in Truth that you (O Prophet) might judge between men, as guided by Allah.

﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنَ لِلْخَائِنِينَ خَصِيمًا﴾ (Al Nisa, 4:105)

If any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah has revealed, they are (no better than) unbelievers ... the wrongdoers...those who rebel.

﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَاخْشَوُا اللَّهَ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ (44) وَكُتِبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ

قَصَاصٌ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَّهُ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ  
اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (45) وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ  
مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى  
وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ  
(46) وَلِيَحْكُمَ أَهْلُ الْإِنْجِيلِ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ  
بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

(Al Maidah, 5:44-47)

The position of humankind is that of Allah's vicegerent (Khalifah), or Allah's representative on earth. The nature of this vicegerency (Khilafah) خلافة described in the Qur'an is as follows. Whatever capacities and abilities humans possess, they are bestowed upon them by Allah. Allah bestowed these gifts on humans so that using them and the will granted them by Allah, They follow and establish His will in their lives as His representatives and not as autonomous entities. This Khilafah has been entrusted on all those who accept Allah as their Lord and Sovereign. The concept is one of popular vicegerency, shared by all believers alike. This vicegerency also means that limited authority has

been delegated to those who run the affairs of believers. Moreover, the authority is bestowed not on any chosen person, family tribe, ethnicity, race or group of people but on all believers, men and women. The Qur'an states: Allah has promised to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will assuredly make them succeed (those who rule) and grant them vicegerency in the land just as He made those before them succeed others.

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

(Al Nur, 24: 55)

Therefore, the two cardinal principles of governance as laid down by the Qur'an are: first sovereignty belongs to Allah and second, the popular vicegerency belongs to all believers. Thus legitimacy in the Islamic political order comes first and foremost from accepting Allah as the Sovereign and His Law,

i.e. Shariah as the Supreme Law. And secondly that the society must be governed by and in accordance with the will of the people. The people or the Ummah are the actual repository of Khilafah and those in authority must have the confidence and support of the Muslim population. In this context, Shariah provides a broad framework within which the people under the umbrella of Divine Guidance participate in developing a civil society and its institutions including various organs of the state.

The whole system of Islamic State from its inception to the selection of the head of the state and all those in positions power as well as its dealing must be conducted by shura, whether it is carried out directly or indirectly through selected or elected representatives. The Qur'an states:

﴿وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ﴾

Their affairs are decided by consultations between them" (Al Shura 42:38).

Even the Prophet ﷺ although he was the recipient of direct guidance from the Supreme Allah, was commanded:

﴿ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ﴾

Consult them in affairs (of moment)"

(Al Imran, 3:159).

Following this advice and lead, Khalifah Omar رضي الله عنه admonished: "There is no Khilafah without consultation" (Please refer to Kanzul Ommal, vol. 5, Hadith No. 2354).

Thus the practice of shura was the mechanism followed at all levels in the selection of political leadership by Muhammad ﷺ and his followers. It was the Islamic community the selected the first four rightly guided Khulafa "خلفاء" although the method of selection and the process of approval differed. The essential principle was consent and confidence of the community and the accountability of those selected before the community. Even afterwards when the heredity rule crept in that violated this community right, a facade of bayaa "بيعة" or community's acceptance of rulers was still maintained. Sayyid Mawdudi (r) in his renowned treatise Khilafat wa Malookiat has described that in selecting or electing persons to positions of power the following four

criteria must be given due consideration in the light of Qur'anic injunctions.

1. It should be only delegated to those who acknowledge the principles, on which the system of Khilafah خلافة is based, because it cannot be entrusted to persons who oppose it.
2. It should not entrusted to tyrants and those who are disobedient to Allah or known sinners but to God-conscious, considerate and righteous believers.
3. It should not be given to the foolish and ignorant but to the knowledgeable, wise and those who understand the state affairs and are capable of running it, mentally and physically.
4. It should be entrusted to the honest such as are worthy of these responsibilities.

Whether an Islamic state is a theocracy, the secularists won't discuss it, though they do create a studied impression that the two are identical. Added to this, no definition of theocracy is offered. Thus in



our view, it will be fair to first define theocracy and then show where does it stand in regard to an Islamic state.

According to C. Ryder Smith: "any tribe or state that claims to be governed by a god or gods may be called a theocracy". Smith also says that theocracy is linked with henotheism in which a particular god belongs to a particular tribe. Whether it existed in purer form, he denies any "historical instance" of it. He though associates the developed form of theocracy with ancient Israel where it was practiced with three important organs: the existence of the shrines where people would go for solution to their problems, the guardians of the shrine who provided the answer on behalf of the gods. And the head of the tribe.

In this configuration, shrines enjoy an important place because of the origination of theocracy there. Smith attributes the coinage of the term theocracy to Flavius Josephus (CE 37-100) who using the analogy of aristocracy and democracy came up with the new name. It is, however, with the coming of the biblical Prophets that the abuses of theocracy were brought out. The Prophets are against the priestly class as

well as kingship that reduce God to an appendix. They are also against existence of the shrines reminiscent of the Greek oracles. The slide in people's morals worries them, and so does their idolatries of the self as opposed to the worship of one true God.

From the preceding, we can sift five distinguishing features of theocracy: **first** it should have a god or a pantheon of gods which need not be true, for they are created by the tribe and thus local, **second**, there is no clear-cut guidance originating from a transcendent, universal God, **third**, the shrine and its guardians are important in dispensing solutions to the people's problems, **fourth**, people are excluded from lawmaking, **fifth**, God or the god's representation is an exclusive privilege confined to a single person or a group of persons (guardians of the shrine or the subsequent clergy).

This being the profile of theocracy, one may ask if Islam is similar to it or if the Islamic governance is theocratic in its essence. For from it, Islam has laid theocracy to rest forever.

**First**, God in Islam is universal, the lord of the planets and everything in them.

**Second**, the Divine will is known, revealed to a credible medium and codified in the form of the Book free from adulteration.

**Third**, it is understandable unambiguous and needs no human arbitration between the text and the reader other than known principles of the art of reading and scholarship.

**Fourth**, the vicegerency in Islam is not particularistic belonging to a person or a class of people. Rather, it is shura-based and participatory.

**Fifth**, Islam believes in the finality of prophethood-that Muhammad ﷺ prophethood has ended- a pointer to the fact that humanity has mastered ability to perceive, reflect and synthesize the emergent facts of life with the Divine Word which, if they want, can sling them toward peace, harmony, perfection.

**Sixth**, other than the foundational principles of the Qur'an and the Prophet's life, which appropriates the former to concretize Islam and serves as a solid footing to build upon, the human enterprise is encouraged to actualize its potential beyond the past and the present.

Put differently, the prophetic realization of Islam is not an attempt to fossilize Islam in time and space

but a creative exercise in building a luminous model that unfolds itself in the form of the tension between the Qur'an and the human situation, and how it eventually embraces the letter to release the upsurge of procreative energies.

In summation thus, if theocracy is life in puddle with reason gagged, Islam is a plunge in the stream of life, with reason uncollared to chart new territories.

In theocracy humans are for religion, in Islam religion is for humans. In theocracy, human intelligence is insulted by parceling out solutions while in Islam solutions are sought in the interplay of the Divine Word with human intelligence. In theocracy life is a tangle, suffocated by excremental manmade solutions, while in Islam it is emancipatory. In theocracy life is a condemnation to a blind fate, in Islam it is a joyous stretch as it moves on actualizing its potential, with God not pitched against humans. In theocracy nature is blind, unpredictable and unknown which can either be worshiped or viewed as a terrifying experience, while in Islam it is a gift from the High above- a sign of Allah – to be harnessed in man's comfort.

With such an obvious divergence between theocracy and Islam, one may still ask what makes an Islamic state different from other states.

To begin with, the Islamic state is neither based on ethnocentrism nor on nationalism. Islam views both as negative for they build up craters of hatred ready to explode in their narrow interests. Humans, says Islam, must not be defined in terms of race, language, geography, and history. For these are at best descriptive of men, instrumental to something but not desirable in themselves, especially when these elements of the human matrix become the organizing principles of society and state. In the case, both ethnocentrism and nationalism become a threat to Islam's universal claim.

"The opposition of qwamiyyah قومية Nationalism) to the world –ummah" says Dr. Ismail Al Fruqi "will be the battle of the century".

Such being the essence of the conflict, Islam defines humans in terms of vicegerency –amoral, activist notion, which is constitutive of its humanism. A being who did not have to go through the scale of evolution to become human but born as such with the divine spark in him so that he could play his heroic role in the process of change toward a just world. This vision can only be fulfilled if social restructuring is effectuated away from nationalism and ethnocentrism, for the two are causative of conflict and discord among people.

The God in Islam is neither particularistic nor redemptive but universal—the God (Allah) of the covenant in which the covenanters are the general mass of humanity who pledged themselves to serve Him in justice over the planet. A kind of a social contract by which Allah bonds Him-self to help humans if they helped Him. This help from Him to humanity is of four kinds: Prophethood, guidance (Sharia'ah), endowment of best human biology, rationality, & emotions, complementary environment with all the organic and inorganic resources to create a civilization enter-prise, and the Divine promise to intervene when needed. Put differently, the application of the sharia'ah is a joint venture between the Creator and the recreated, which exalts the latter to a status in accord with his splendid birth.

Thus, calling for a universal state based on the concept of human in which other people can be accommodated, even when they are not Muslims, is natural to its definition of man. Added to this, pluralism in Islam is not cosmetic but real in the sense that it recognizes people other than Islamic as separate identities worthy of respect, which can

govern themselves through their own laws and institutions and still be part of the Muslims ummah. The Islamic state undertakes to preserve the constitutive cultural units even against the, Muslims. This is not merely a doctrinal position but can be viewed in the Muslim practice over the centuries. That is why one can say that the plurality of laws within the same state is major development in human history, which only Islam and the Muslims could have accomplished.

Islamic state is thus not exterior to the sharia'ah but reflective of it, seeking to organize as well as animate life around the collective goal of human welfare and justice so that they can live in the eternal gaze of Allah free from sin (crime) and fear.

Nor has this state an adversarial relation with the civil society or for that matter the individual. The three move in concert with a rhythm that comes naturally with shared values and perceptions. The tension law between law and individual or the never-ending conflict between the societal good and the individual rights so often the case in secular. Societies is mostly nonexistent in an Islamic state, for the sharia'ah contrary to manmade laws, is held sacrosanct both be the state and its citizens. More

important, the implementation of the Islamic law is not exterior to the believers to be resisted or at best accepted with a grudge as the sovereign will of the ruler, but carried and adored by the collective conscience of the Muslim people—a conscience shaped by their reverence of the Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah.

Equally consequential is the fact that an Islamic citizen is productive individual who seeks to actualize his potential in the service of Allah. Good deeds flow from him because he yearns for felicity in the life to come. He listens to the cadence of life and harmonizes it with the sharia'ah —a civilizational undertaking that makes use of the human as well as natural resources. In pursuit of his objective, the individual does not find himself at variance with the state but facilitated by it since they serve the same God, the provident Himself. The synchronization is natural and not imposed.

In summation, we may say that the Islamic state embraces the following concepts:

- Tauhid توحيد (belief in one, unique, all powerful transcendent God).



- **Risalah** رسالة or Prophethood. The real guiders for humanity are the Prophets of Allah. Others are fake.
- Guidance or Sharia'ah to make humans reconcile with themselves, free from sin, guilt, and fear.
- Rationality within and without the system. The Sharia'ah itself is the supreme embodiment of rationality, its implementation and system building to make it cohere with life and thus bring out procreativity, calls for reason analysis and systematization.
- Participatory vicegerency for all based on consultation (Shura), with trickle down decentralization of power.
- Respect for authority, love and concern for the citizens. The ruled-and the ruler concept, which gives rise to duality between the state and the civil society, is nonexistent.
- Multiplicity and pluralism in its fullest expression with the right of self-governance and separate laws.
- Universal state, a global brotherhood.

The western ideology places a great emphasis on the institution of democracy. Yet it is not an unmixed blessing and has seeds of its destruction from within. Democracy as developed in the West is based on the concept of popular sovereignty. There is no relevance to the eternal religious guidance and absolute moral values in matters of governance. As it evolved, it developed a variety of forms of self-government and political processes to determine the will of the people for running the affairs of the state. Although it has succeeded in developing several mechanisms for popular participation, but because of the absence of firm moral moorings, its standards of right and wrong have been subjected to the whims of the people. Consequently, it has resulted in decriminalization of major evil practices and moral sins exposing the human society to the tyrannies of moral relativism, the idiosyncrasies of majority rule, racial and class-based tensions, economic exploitation and erosion of all basics essential for the sustenance of human society. Emphasizing quantity and counting of hands it has replaced quality and

eternal standards of right, truth and justice. In the U.S it has become a façade behind which the capitalist class and the special interest groups continue to rule and dominate its society. In a number of other countries including most of the Muslim world, narrow tribal –cum- class political along with the dominance of a political elite placed and backed by the Western powers have led to the establishment of one party dictatorships in the name of democracy.

Reflecting on this situation, the well-known Islamic intellectual and activist Khurshid Ahmad writing in the Muslim World (volume 90,number 1-2,2000) has the following to say: "Islam and the Muslim Ummah (sic) brook no sympathy for arbitrary and authoritarian rule. Whatever arbitrary power reigns is more a product of colonialization and Westernization, and not of Muslim ideals, history or contemporary aspirations. They regard the Western secular version of democracy alien to their principles, values and traditions. But they have their own concept and rich tradition of democracy and people's participation that ensures just rule, consultative

processes at all levels, respect for rights and dissent, the independence of judiciary and politico-cultural pluralism. There is no contradiction between Islam and this essence of democracy”.

It is worth concluding this article with Ahmad’s conclusion, as follows. “ In the contemporary post – colonial history of the Muslim world, despotism and secularism or socialism has gone together, while Islamic resurgence and people’s freedoms and popular participation are complementary. Despite freedom from the colonial yoke, the Muslim Ummah (sic) is still struggling for its right –its democracy right-to freely develop its polity, society and economy in light of its own ideas, values and aspirations. It refuses to live under the dictate of concepts and models in conflict with faith, opposed to its values, distasteful to its history and repugnant to its traditions. If democracy means rights of people to self-determination and self-fulfillment, that is what Islam and Muslim people have been striving for, nothing more and nothing less”

# **Integration of Vernacular Culture & Religion Into the Foreign Language Curriculum Of Compulsory English: Possibilities and Prospects in the Local and Global Scenario**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper discovers the possibilities, practicabilityes and prospects of integrating local/ vernacular culture and religion into the curriculum of English language. A brief analysis of the foreign languages curricula of Pakistan and those of some

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advanced countries of the world has been given in this study. The analysis shows that local culture and religion have been integrated thereby. Various studies of such phenomena suggest that it has been found that incorporation of topics from the local culture and religion motivates foreign language learning. Such assimilation has positive impact upon the reading and comprehension of foreign languages text due to its learners prior familiarity and understanding about the given background. Some reasons for the slight touch of religion found in the text-books have emerged under the current wave of modernity. The controversial issues like teaching of religion and culture to the students of culturally different backgrounds and different religions, and, integrative motivation requiring the learners to have immersion into and alignment with the whole culture of foreign language have also been discussed hereby. Concludingly, it has been observed that integration of vernacular culture and religion is beneficial for meeting out the functional and instrumental needs of foreign language learners. Priority should be given to the teaching of language through vernacular culture and religion. When the students become acquainted

with the structure and syntax of the new language, then, they can be allowed to appreciate the pieces of native literature of the foreign language.

**Key words:** Vernacular culture, religion, integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, foreign language curriculum.

## **Procedure**

This is a descriptive and exploratory study. The critical analysis has been made through historical research procedure. Literature survey was the source of information collection. Some past research studies have also been consulted to reach the conclusions.

## **Introduction**

Language is itself culture of the people who produced it. There is an agreement among the linguists that there does lie great relationship between the knowledge of a foreign language and knowledge of the culture from which that language "originated." The integrative motivation requires the learners to acquire the language while immersing themselves into the whole culture of the language in

order to identify themselves with and become part of that society.

The philosophy of instrumental motivation is contrary to that of integrative motivation. The argument is that whether there lies the feasibility of incorporating the local culture and religion into the curriculum of English which is being taught as a foreign language in Pakistan and many other countries of the world. Can the instrumentally motivated learners learn English remaining no more concerned with the culture from which their target language (English) emerged?.

### **Language Linkage with the Religion and Culture of a Society:**

Snook (1972) asserts that language enshrines a cultural outlook and even religious language is no exception. Both religion and culture have a strong bearing on the language learning process in a society. As Khalidi (2004) explains that every language is a vehicle of thought, the 'carrier of content'. Since religion is a major component of



thought, it is not surprising that religion and language are often closely related.

According to Stern (1984), language cannot be taught for long without coming face to face with the social context factors of a society, which have strong bearing on language and language learning process. Language is the outcome of social networking. Pride (1974) has placed religion at the top of the list in social networking. So, integration of religion into the curriculum of English language will be beneficial for strengthening the social role of this foreign language in Pakistani society.

Karmani (1995) finds out that of all the manifestations of human culture, language and religion are two of the most basic, the most universal and the most important factors for understanding the motivations of any group of people. Jakobson (1973) asserts that language is a constituent of culture. In the ensemble of cultural phenomena, it functions as the groundwork and universal medium of culture.

Religion and culture are inseparable from each other. Ali (2004) finds that culture claims to interpret politics and religion. Khursheed (1990) has

investigated that culture takes its origin from three things, namely, Religion, History and Geography. Khursheed adds that Pakistan came into being in the name of Islam and its greatest heritage is Islamic culture. Hassan (1999) reiterates that presently dominant color of the culture of Pakistan is Islamic and generally it is called Islamic culture. Hence, it implies that if we want to encourage English language teaching in Pakistan, the contents of English curriculum should be synonymous with the religious belief and faith. The Indian Education Commission 1882, as cited in Sultan (1991), found that the first and foremost cause of the failure of imparting a higher order of English Education to the Muslims was the absence of instruction in the tenets of their faith. Thus, Indian Education Commission's discovery puts forth a relevant case of foreign language contents relation with the local culture and religion of the society.

### **Motivating English Language Teaching Through Integrating Local Culture and Religion:**

Several strategies have been mentioned for the foreign language teachers for motivating their

students in foreign language learning process. Shrum and Glisan (2000) suggest in this context that students should be encouraged to express their own ideas concerning values, morals and religious views as shaped by their own cultures and religious convictions. Webster (2001) states, "good teaching is making students aware of their own attitudes and beliefs" (p.23).

### **Various Studies Showing the Positive Impact of Local Culture and Religion Integration upon Reading and Comprehension of the English Text:**

Lipson (1983), Eastern Michigan University, conducted a study to find out the influence of religious affiliation on children's memory for text information. The subjects were 32 fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade students of average or above average reading ability. Each subject received a packet of experimental materials containing three expository passages. The first passage was "culturally neutral". The second passage was designed to provide culturally specific stimulus to the Jewish children. The content of the third passage was expected to be

more familiar to the Catholic children. The packet of materials contained a recall sheet for each passage and a page of 10 probed recall questions for each of the target passages. Measures of free recall, probed recall, and reading time were used as dependent variables. Prior religious knowledge about a topic was found to be a powerful factor in post-reading performance. Each group recalled more text-based propositions and generated more implicit recall for their culturally familiar passage. They made fewer errors in recall on the passage that contained familiar material and they took less time to read that passage. In the light of these findings, it can be said that integration of culturally and religiously familiar passages/contents into the curriculum of English in Pakistan will facilitate the English reading and comprehension for the Pakistani students.

Asraf (1996) aptly remarked:

"By using Islamic texts written in English, the teacher will be providing Muslim students with contents that they are familiar with. Thus, they are more likely to relate to the literature and therefore more

likely to respond to it in a meaningful way. It is relatively well established that readers make use of culture specific schemes in relating what they read to what they already know, and consequently, construct the writer's intended meaning. When the relevant cultural background is missing, reading can become a time consuming, laborious and frustrating experience" (p. 14).

Webster (2001) has quoted the following examples of different research studies to prove the strong influence of cultural specific schemata on reading comprehension:

- i. Steffensen et al., (1979) conducted the first full-scale cross-cultural study that used students from two different cultures, India and United States. They found that culture specific schemata had a significant effect on reading comprehension.
- ii. Reynolds et al., (1982) conducted a seminal study that explored the effects of culture specific

schemata in sub cultural studies. The researchers found that students' cultures had a significant influence on reading comprehension.

- iii. Carrell (1983) and Malik (1990) studied English as a second language or English as a foreign language and also produced similar results. They involved participants from two cultures who read both a culturally familiar text and a culturally unfamiliar text; variations sometimes occurred. The combined results from the studies, both quantitative and qualitative, indicated that participants specific knowledge of cultural schemata as embodied in a text was a strong indicator of reading comprehension.

Webster's (2001) studies have supported the supposition that student's cultural backgrounds greatly influence the content of the information they can assimilate. Students are more likely to assimilate information that is congruent with their cultural background and more likely to misinterpret or ignore

information that is inconsistent with, or contradictory to their cultural background. Students enjoy literature best from their own culture (s) and are able to enter literature from their own culture (s) more successfully.

### **Analysis of the Integrated Elements of Islamic Culture and Religion into National Curriculum English Compulsory in Pakistan: Local Scenario**

The Government of Pakistan has revised the prevalent curricula of all subjects upto intermediate level in 2002. Integration of Islamic culture and religion has been found apparent in the analytical view of the revised English curriculum. According to the Government of Pakistan (March 2002), it has been stressed in the Aims of National Curriculum English Compulsory (March 2002) class I – V:

- i. "Inculcate the sense of gratitude to Allah Almighty for His blessings" (p. 5);
- ii. "Include matter, where possible, pertaining to Islamic civilization" (p. 5).

Among the contents of National Curriculum English Compulsory (March 2002), the Government of Pakistan (March 2002) has reiterated:

*"Nursery rhymes should inculcate the Islamic spirit" (p. 13).*

In an elaborative list of contents set for the National Curriculum English Compulsory (March 2002) class I – X, the Government of Pakistan (March 2002) has particularly prescribed following Islamic topics:

1. My Creator;
2. Last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Sallallah-o-Alaih-i-Wasallum);
3. Religion;
4. Islamic Festivals;
5. Events with special reference to Islamic history;
6. Muslim national heroes;
7. Poems reflecting Islamic, moral, social, ethical values.

These were the guidelines/blue-prints presented by the Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Education



(curriculum wing) for the preparation of English text-books to be taught to the students of the relevant class-levels. The text-books of compulsory English curriculum contain two sections, i.e., prose & poetry section. While analyzing the prose and poetry section, individually it has been noted that comparatively prose-section of the compulsory English text-books contains considerable proportion of Islamic culture and religious element while poetry-section lacks it. It can be viewed hereby as found out by Jundran (2003):

**The Comparative Projection of Islamic Cultural and Religious Element into Prose and Poetry Section of Punjab Textbook Board English (2002)**

Punjab Textbook Board's (2002) English class X (2002) comprises total 24 lessons. There are 07 poems authored by the foreign poets and 17 prose lessons written by the local Muslim Pakistani authors. It is the prominent feature of the Muslim authors' developed prose material that it has incorporated many salient Islamic references.

A brief view witnesses this fact:

<b>Prose – Lessons Included in the Contents of English Class X</b>	<b>Selected References’ Relevance for Developing Purely Religious and Islamic Worldview</b>
i. Preamble	It is based upon solely English translation of Sura Fateha (Al-Quran) which evokes the learners’ sense of gratefulness to Allah Almighty and teaches the idea of Tawheed.
ii. The Prophet (PBUH) of Mercy.	<p>This whole lesson comprises the biographical sketch of Hazrat Muhammad Sallallah-o-Alaih-i-Wasallum and demonstrates his excellent character as a perfect and ideal man. This lesson helps the learners/readers in building their personality in the light of Search.</p> <p><b>Comprehension question:</b></p> <p>“How does the Holy Quran</p>

	describe the Prophet (Peace be upon him)" (p. 13)?
iii. A Father's Advice.	<p>"My first and foremost advice to you, my son, is to fear Allah" (p. 18).</p> <p>"I entrust you unto Allah and His protection in both this world and the next one. Allah Hafiz" (p. 20).</p> <p>Comprehension question:</p> <p>"Give the qualities of Allah as done by the writer of the letter" (p. 21).</p>
iv. The School Library.	The speakers' names who participate in the discussion i.e. Bilal, Badar, Omar, Kaleem have been taken from the Islamic history.
v. Tariq Bin Ziad.	<p>He (Tariq Bin Ziad) drew out his sword and said,</p> <p>"Men of Islam,---- if we die, we shall have immortal glory ----. They all shouted Allah-o-Akbar! Allah-o-Akbar -----. This battle</p>

	took place in Spain in 711 A.D between the Christians and the Muslims" (p. 75).
vi.The Beautiful City.	The lesson and its exercise incorporates following Islamic names:  (King) Yousaf, (King) Abdullah, (King) Omar, Ali.
vii.Two Wedding Ceremonies.	"Alas! If people here only remember how simply the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) married his daughter Hazrat Fatima (R.A) to Hazarat Ali (R.A) ----. The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) had entertained his guests, with dates and milk. After the Nikah ceremony, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) had addressed his daughter thus, 'Fatima, remember, never leave the house without your husband's consent'. And to Hazrat Ali (R.A) he said, 'treat your wife with love and care and be not harsh, for harshness

	destroys matrimonial bliss' " (p. 98).
viii. Sindbad & Hindbad.	<p>"Have I not any right to the blessing of Allah? Am I not one of His creatures" (p. 106)?</p> <p>"Allah always helps and rewards those who work hard" (p. 106).</p> <p>"Everyday he prayed to Allah for His help, guidance and blessings" (p. 106).</p>
ix. The Great Sacrifice.	<p>This whole lesson revolves around the great sacrifice of Hazrat Ibraheem (A.S) and Hazrat Ismaeel (A.S). The beginning lines of this lesson are:</p> <p>"The Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) was once asked, what is Islam? And he answered, obedience to Allah and kindness to His creatures. Thus Islam means total submission to Allah's will" (p. 117).</p> <p>This lesson ends with the mention of great sacrifice offered</p>

	by the grandson of our Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) on the 10 <sup>th</sup> of Moharram.
x. Pleasant Memories.	It incorporates phrases: "Chand rat; Eid Day; Eidee; Aslamu Alakum; Khuda Hafiz" (pp. 123-125).
xi. The Great Leader Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.	"The Quaid had a clear concept of Islam as a code of life ----. Our outlook is not only fundamentally different but it is opposed to the Hindus" (p. 133). "The demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims was an expression of the deepest emotions of their political and cultural identity whose roots lie embedded in the state of Madina founded by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)" (p. 133).
xii. Faisal Mosque.	This lesson tells the readers about the place/status of masjid in an Islamic society, in general and about the location and structure of Faisal Mosque, in particular. It incorporates:

	<p>"A mosque or masjid is a place of prayer and worship for the Muslims. All over the world the call for prayer (Azan) is relayed five times a day from the mosques to remind the Muslims of their duty to Allah and His Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon him)" (p. 140).</p> <p>"There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet" (pp. 41-42)</p>
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Selected references from the prose lessons of English class X, authored by the local Muslim and Pakistani writers, witness their clear Islamic indoctrination. They support and inculcate Islamic ideology and Islamic culture among the learners. The Islamic frame of reference and religious element is avowedly visible in these curricular prose works of the Muslim writers.

Apart from the prose-section, all the seven poems included in English class X have been

composed by foreign poets, and, with the exception of the first poem, the poetry text is not replete with any classical religious/Islamic/ideological reference or allusion. The titles of the poems along with their respective authors' names are as under:

<b>Title of the Poem</b>	<b>The Poet's Name</b>
1. Blessings of God	Cecil Alexander
2. A Little Word	Anonymous
3. Drive the Nail Aright	Norman Macleod
4. The World	R.B Rands
5. A Nation's Strength	Ralph Waldo Emerson
6. The Blind Boy	C. Cibber
7. My Mother	Ann Taylor.

The ethical, moral, reformatory and social element is, surely, there, in these poems. But the citation of Islamic cultural references or the religious orientations which are diffused into prose lessons written by the Pakistani Muslim authors lack in these poems.

This comparative analysis of prose and poetry lessons included in English class X depicts that



topics/themes related to Islamic civilization, in particular, are deficient in the poems and its main reason is their composition by the foreign/non-Muslim poets. It cannot be denied that the reflection of poet's own background, worldview, ideas, frame of reference and motives does occur into his writings.

As an example, this analysis was taken from the compulsory English class X. The same is the case with the school level other English text-books i.e., Primary or Middle level. Their prose-section depicts the diffusion of Islamic culture and religious element. But, comparatively, their poetry-section lacks the integration of religious or vernacular cultural integration.

### **Integration of Religion and Culture into the Curriculum of English (as a Foreign Language) in Foreign Countries: Global Scenario:**

- (a) The Western Australian Experience:** Dixon (2000) notes down with reference to Nott report's fourteen recommendation for the

provision and resourcing of a religious studies programme throughout the primary and secondary government schools that "religion was to be integrated into English with the aim to include personal development, understanding and tolerance at individual and cultural level" (p.223).

**(b) The British Curriculum Authority's**

**Remarks:** In the context of "Nationalism, identity and English curriculum", Ross (2000) quotes remarks of the British Chief Executive of School Curriculum and Assessment Authority:

*A key role of a national curriculum should be the explicit reinforcement of a common culture: pupils first and foremost should be introduced to the history of the part of the world where they live, its literary heritage and main religions traditions. They should be taught other things too; but the culture*

*and traditions of the British should be at the core (p.152).*

This synoptic statement clearly shows that the British Authority's focus upon the inclusion of local history, culture, literature, and religion into the national curriculum and Ross has reiterated it with reference to a language curriculum.

### **(c) Projections of Local Literature, Culture, History, Civilization in the Curriculum of Foreign Languages in America:**

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL 1998-99) as cited in New Jersey Department of Education (n.d.) mentions in the Contents Draft of World Languages the inclusion of following cultural topics:

<b>"Level</b>	<b>Content</b>
Novice-Mid	Cultural and Historical Figures
Novice-High	Cultural and Historical Figures
Intermediate Low	History, Art, Literature, Civilization
Pre-Advance	Concepts of broader and cultural significance, topics of social and personal interest i.e., literature, arts, etc" (p. 4).

The inclusion of history, literature, culture, civilization in the Contents Draft of World Languages in the context of TEFL (Teaching of English as a Foreign Language) verifies the point that Islamic literature, Islamic culture, Islamic civilization and Islamic history are relevant to the foreign language curriculum of the Muslim countries.

**(d) Focus upon the Uniqueness of Student's Own Culture in the Modern Foreign Language Standards of Virginia:**

According to Virginia Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia, Richmond (n.d.), the course description of modern foreign language level I relates the Cultural and Linguistic Comparisons Model and adds thereby:

"Demonstrate an awareness of unique elements of the student's own culture"(p.5).

## **Discussion:**

### **Some Issues Pertaining to the Integration of Culture and Religion into National Curriculum.**

#### **a) Reason for the absence of religious preferences in the text-books:**

Nord (1995) as cited in Glanzer (1998) notes the reason for hesitation to include religious preferences in the textbooks that it is not because most textbook writers or educators are actively "hostile" to religion or have some secret secular humanist agenda up their sleeve. Instead, it has to do with the secular world view that many educators and textbook authors accept without reflection. Secular ways of thinking and living are part of the cultural air of modernity – and educators breathe that air, taking it for granted. Nord concludes:

"The underlying world view of modern education divorces human kind from its dependence on God; it replaces religious answers to many of the ultimate questions of human existence with

secular answers; Indeed ....at least in its textbooks and formal curriculum students are indoctrinated into the modern (secular) world view ..." (p.378).

Doerr (1998) has added some new ideas upon this topic. Like Nord, Doerr states the same phenomena in the beginning that textbooks and schools tend to slight religion not out of "hostility" towards religion, but, in addition to it, it is because of:

- (i) low demand;
- (ii) lack of time;
- (iii) lack of suitable materials; and
- (iv) fear of giving "offense" or generating unpleasant "controversy."

In the prior analysis of the culture and religion proportion integrated into the existing Pakistani English compulsory curricula, it was found that poetry-section of the compulsory English curricula was almost free from the integration of local cultural and religious element despite its great demand on behalf of the subject-teaches (Jundran, 1999).

Although faith-integrated poetry has great scope for motivating English language teaching, and, Hamd and Na'at are the integral feature of local non-native poetry. Moreover, they are compulsory part of all oriental languages curricula being taught in Pakistan. Yet no poem like Hamd, Na'at, Salam, Dua was included thereby in the foreign curriculum of English language. The overriding of local culture and religion in the poetry-section of existing compulsory English curricula may be due to non-availability of such poetry materials. Because, availability of quality religious and cultural poetry materials for the compulsory English curriculum was not an easy task.

**(b) Teaching of Religion and Culture to the Students with Multi-Religious and Culturally Different Background: Is it a Problem to Students?:**

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)'s report (as cited in Qureshi, 2004) presents a criticism upon the inclusion of religion into subjects like Urdu, English, Social Studies, in Pakistan. The said report does not find justifiable the integration of

religion into the text-books of Pakistani curricula for there reside people of different religions in Pakistan. Let us examine the justification of religion integration into the national and international perspective, in the light of this criticism:

Any system of education whose curriculum does not include religion is defective and incomplete (Matsaung, 1999; Chidester, 1994). Matsaung (2003) investigated in a study whether students from different religious traditions perceived the teaching of religion in multi-faith classes as problematic. An anonymous pre-coded instrument, the Student Response Questionnaire (SRQ) was used for the purpose. Faithwise, 31 practising Islam, 84 African Traditional Religion, 25 the Bahai Faith, 159 Christianity and 21 did not indicate their religion.

The findings strongly showed that students enjoyed studying together with their counterparts from different faiths. Successful continuity of teaching of Religious English depended largely on the desire for the quality of instruction. Students indicated that the scope of the work given to them



was not problematic. However, they demanded that the scope of work should feature in tests and examinations. In the light of this study's findings, it can be concluded that if religion and culture are integrated into the curriculum of English curriculum for the enhancement of its quality of instruction and if these topics are also included in the tests and examinations then their integration will be beneficial. As noted in Qureshi (2004), it is mentionable here that minorities are 2% in Pakistan while 98% population is Muslim in Pakistan. The integration of religion into the Pakistani curricula is no more a threat to the minorities.

**(c) Integrative Motivation Requiring the Learners to have Immersion into the Whole Culture of the Language:**

Languages come with some cultural associations attached. By speaking the language, therefore, one automatically (to a greater or lesser extent) aligns oneself with the culture of the language. Language can never be divorced from the culture that produced

it and the people who speak it. Tang (1999) asserts that the learner's cultural integration is very essential for learning a language. The integrative motivation refers to the desire of language learners to acquire the language while immersing themselves into the whole culture of the language, in order to "identify themselves with and become part of that society." Because, English language has cultural associations of the English. Thus, it implies that integrative motivation will require its learners' association (to a greater or lesser extent) with the religion or culture of its native speakers, as cited in Brown (1994).

**(d) Instrumentally Motivated Learners'  
Concern: No Interest in the Culture From  
which their Target Language Emerged:**

Tang (1999) explains that instrumental motivation refers to the functional need for learners to acquire the language in order to serve some utilitarian purpose. The argument is that such instrumentally motivated learners are neither concerned with the culture from which their target

language emerged, nor interested in developing any feelings of affinity with the native speakers of that language. They will not be concerned with the active and deliberate immersion into and exposure to the culture of that target language.

### **Conclusion**

**Functional Need of the Pakistani Learners does not require them to have Immersion into the Culture of English Language.**

English is taught in Pakistan as a foreign language for serving some utilitarian purposes, such as securing a job, having access to the latest knowledge available in English version or negotiations and deals in the world trade, etc. Chaudhry (1995) quotes Prof. Riaz Hassan's remarks:

“ We should make the teaching of English language biased all the way through, on the premise that it is more important for a student to be able to function in the language than to acquire a few grabbled,

imperfectly assimilated opinions about Chaucer or Shakespeare (p.48)."

David Queen (1985) suggested, as cited in Chaudhry (1995), with reference to English language teaching in Pakistan:

"Priority be given to the teaching of language through vernacular culture, and when the students become acquainted with the structure and syntax of the new language then they can be allowed to appreciate the pieces of literature of the Western World" (p.49).

David Queen's analysis implies that preference should be given to the inclusion of local culture into the curriculum of English language in the beginning classes i.e.; at school level.

According to Brook's (1990) remarks, literatures with a local setting and non-native English literatures can be used in the teaching of English in a non-native context. The prospects of using localized

literature are bright in India, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Nigeria, Kenya and other countries of Africa where a tradition of non-native English literature has developed or is developing successfully. Ebrahim (2004) shows tilt towards localized English while quoting Johnson that English is not a foreign language in independent South Asia. "English or more accurately, Indish, Pakish, Banglish is a language of the Indian Sub-continent"(P.25).

Use of localized literature into English curriculum means coming across the local vernacular culture and its religion. The more we use English for our instrumental and utilization purposes, the more will be there induction of local culture. Saeed (2004) adds, "the learning of English does not in any way compromise our identity ... the people are united by profound bonds of religion, history and geography" (p.5).

In the light of this discussion, it can be concluded that integration of vernacular culture and religion into the curriculum of foreign language will

not only motivate its learning due to its easier comprehension of local religio-cultural text rather it will strengthen the identity of the target country by keeping away its learners from the cultural xenophobia i.e., reducing the sense of its alienation from the local culture.

## **Implications**

This descriptive and exploratory study of the \_\_\_ Integration of Vernacular Culture and Religion into the Foreign Language Curriculum of Compulsory English: Possibilities and Prospects in the Local and Global Scenario\_\_\_ implies that:

1. Research studies should be conducted to determine the exact proportion of vernacular culture and religion wrought lessons into the existing curricula of English language at various class-levels.
2. Selections from the good pieces of localized literature (non-native English literature) or better English translations of L1 (1<sup>st</sup> Language) literary

texts should be made for incorporation into the national curricula of English language.

3. Selections from the non-native literature, replete with local culture and religion, for the foreign language curriculum of English, may be made by the collaboration of religion-experts, subject-experts and curriculum-experts.
4. Quality books in English (prose and poetry) by eminent Pakistani authors ought to form the part of existing English curricula. Contemporary Pakistani English poetry, fiction and prose are both modern and relevant.
5. Already, it has been analyzed that a strong bearing of local culture and religion is visible in the prose-section of prevalent English curricula at school level but their poetry-section is deficient in this regard despite its high scope and great demand (Jundran, 1996; Jundran, 1999). So, faith-integrated poetry like Hamd (Hymn); Na'at (the Prophet's epithet/eulogy/encomium); Salaam (Salutation), Dua (Prayers) need to be incorporated on priority basis.

6. Instead of making the young users of English diffident about their vernacular English they should be taught to regard English as a tool for work, and not as the symbol of sophistication.
7. The irrelevant and unattainable variety of English text may not be imposed upon the learners of English as a foreign language. It will diminish their learning process.
8. Great attention should be paid to the choice of literary texts for the foreign language curriculum. Literary text has advantages over non-literary text in the teaching and learning of second language. However, Larik's (2005) advice is valuable in this context that student's adequate competence in English, their appropriate cognitive development and accessibility of the cultural references in the texts should be ensured.
9. The selection of vernacular culture and religion based contents should be made for inclusion into the curriculum of English (foreign language) according to specific criteria developed by the panel of experts.



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